

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 SAJ-01 OMB-01 CIEP-03 DRC-01 EB-11

COME-00 SCCT-02 /125 W

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R 070955Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3448

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AEMBASSY BEIRUT 5746

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4479

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, XF, MILI

SUBJ: WAR TALK--REBUKE TO GUR

REF: TEL AVIV 4308

1. SUMMARY. CHIEF OF STAFF GUR'S JULY 29 SPEECH TO THE ISRAEL-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS RAISED SEVERAL ISSUES CENTRAL TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE GOVERNMENT, IN PARTICULAR A) WHETHER THE COS OR OTHER SENIOR MILITARY FIGURES SHOULD MAKE PUBLIC SPEECHES, PARTICULARLY TO NON-MILITARY GROUPS, ON POLITICAL-MILITARY ISSUES AND B) WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE MILITARY CENSOR'S AUTHORITY. FOLLOWING STRONG CRITICISM OF GUR'S ACTION IN THE CABINET, PRIME MINISTER RABIN HAS ADMINISTERED A REBUKE TO HIS COS, ADVISING HIM TO REFRAIN FROM POLITICAL PRONOUNCEMENTS IN THE FUTURE. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, ISRAEL'S LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY HAARETZ REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN FINED IL 4000 FOR PUBLISHING AND

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ARTICLE CRITICIZING GUR'S SPEECH, IN VIOLATION OF MILITARY CENSOR'S

INSTRUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. CHIEF OF STAFF GUR'S JULY 29 ADDRESS TO ISRAEL-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, IN ADDITION TO STIMULATING EXTENSIVE PRESS COMMENTARY AS TO WHETHER ISRAEL INDEED MAY BE CONFRONTED IN NEAR FUTURE BY NEW ARAB MILITARY OFFENSIVE, HAS ALSO SPARKED OFF POLITICAL CONTROVERSY ABOUT A) THE LIMITATIONS OR LACK THEROF ON COS' PREROGATIVE TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF WAR AND PEACE IN PUBLIC FORUMS AND B) THE PARAMETERS OF MILITARY CENSORSHIP.

3. TRANSPORT MINISTER GAD YAACOBI HAS TOLD US THAT COS GUR WAS STRONGLY CRITICIZED BY MOST MINISTERS IN A RECENT CABINET MEETING FOR GOING MUCH TOO FAR IN HIS COMMENTS ON JULY 29 (REFTEL). YAACOBI WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT GUR'S TALK ABOUT POSSIBLE ISRAELI PRE-EMPTION AND THE NEGATIVE IMPACT THIS HAD ON FRIENDLY CAPITALS. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, HE SAID, PRIMIN RABIN PASSED A REBUKE TO GUR THROUGH DEFMIN PERES. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, GUR WAS ALSO TOLD A) TO CONFINE HIMSELF TO ADDRESSING MILITARY GATHERINGS IN THE FUTURE AND B) TO AVOID GETTING INTO "POLITICS TOO SOON."

4. PRIOR TO THE EVENTS REPORTED ABOVE, HAARETZ AUGUST 1, OVER OBJECTION OF MILITARY CENSOR, PUBLISHED ARTICLE BY YOEL MARCUS, " CHIEF OF STAFF GUR TALKS TOO MUCH," WHICH LASHED OUT IN A SEMI-SERIOUS SATIRICAL FASHION AT GUR FOR DISCUSSING IN A PUBLIC FORUM POSSIBILITY THAT ISRAEL MIGHT LAUNCH A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST ARAB STATES. AFTER ASKING RHETORICALLY HOW GUR COULD FIND TIME TO APPEAR AT SOCIAL FUNCTION IN VIEW OF HIS ASSESSMENT THAT WAR COULD BEGIN BEFORE END OF SUMMER. MARCUS WROTE THAT IF HE WERE WORKING FOR ARAB INTELLIGENCE, HE WOULD DRAW FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS FROM GUR'S PRESENTATION: A) IDF IS NOT PREPARED FOR WAR; B) IDF HAS NO PLAN OF ACTION SHOULD ARABS ENTER UN ZONES IN VIOLATION OF DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS; C) IDF IS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF WAR WITHIN TWO MONTHS; D) GOI HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER IT CAN RUN POLITICAL RISK OF LAUNCHING PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AND E) IN VIEW OF ABOVE, IT IS IN ARAB INTEREST NOT TO WAIT UNTIL IDF GETS ORGANIZED AND ISRAELI PUBLIC PULLS ITSELF OUT OF ITS POSTWAR "DEPRESSION."

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5. ACCORDING TO A USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE, MILITARY CENSOR'S REASON FOR BANNING THE ARTICLE FROM PUBLICATION WAS NOT THAT IT DIVULGED ANY SECRETS DAMAGING TO NATIONAL SECURITY BUT RATHER THAT IT RIDICULED THE CHIEF OF STAFF. SAME SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT HAARETZ HAS BEEN FINED IL4000 BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL FOR HAVING PROCEEDED WITH PUBLICATION.

6. COMMENT THE "GUR" INCIDENT BY NO MEANS REPRESENTS THE

END OF " WAR TALKS" HERE, SINCE ISRAELIS APPEAR CONVINCED THAT SYRIA IS LIKELY AGAIN TO OPEN HOSTILITIES AT SOME POINT WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR. FOR AWHILE, AT LEAST, HOWEVER, WE WOULD EXPECT A SOFTENING OF WAR RHETORIC EMANATING FROM OFFICIAL GOI SOURCES.-- AT LEAST TO EXTENT OF AVOIDING STATEMENTS ON PREEMPTION OPTION.

7. THE QUESTION OF MILITARY CENSORSHIP IS BEING RAISED IN THE PARLIAMENT. THIS SHOULD HELP KEEP GUR IN LINE, AS WELL AS PROVIDE A FEW INTERESTING POLITICAL PYROTECHNICS SHOULD THIS ISSUE BE SERIOUSLY DEBATED.
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